

TOP 10 TURKEY TIPS!!

1. Thawing a frozen turkey requires patience. The safest method is to thaw turkey in the refrigerator. Be sure to plan ahead—it takes approximately 3 days for a 20 pound turkey to fully defrost.
2. For crisper skin, unwrap the turkey the day before roasting and leave it uncovered in the refrigerator overnight. It dries the skin out allowing it to crisp well.
3. Cooking times will differ depending on whether your bird was purchased fresh or frozen. Plan on 20 minutes per pound in a 350° F oven for a defrosted turkey and 10 to 15 minutes per pound for fresh. I roast at 325° for a little longer and when I remove the foil I pop up the oven temp to 350°-375°. Remember the changes when you use convection vs. conventional ovens. Convection is more efficient and browns faster.
4. A turkey will cook more evenly if it is not densely stuffed. Consider adding flavor by loosely filling the cavity with aromatic vegetables—carrots, celery, onion or garlic work nicely—or by carefully tucking fresh herbs underneath the breast skin. For the stuffing lovers, cook the dressing in a casserole dish on the side.
5. For even roasting, tuck the wings and truss your turkey legs.
6. Before roasting, coat the outside of the turkey with butter, vegetable or olive oil, season with salt and pepper and tightly cover the breast with aluminum foil to prevent over-browning (it will be removed in step 7).
7. Don't be a peeping tom! Once you get the turkey in the oven, resist the temptation to open the oven door and admire your handiwork. When the oven temperature fluctuates, you're only increasing the likelihood of a dry bird. About 45 minutes before you think the turkey is done, remove the foil from the breast to allow it to brown. Also, see step 11.
8. Remove the turkey from the oven when the deepest spot between the leg and the breast reads 180° F on an instant-read thermometer. It should easily register 165° at the breast and 185° at the thigh. For your friends who still stuff their birds, stuffing MUST BE AT LEAST 165°. Bigger birds will do something called 'carry-over' cooking – which means it will continue to cook even after you remove it from the oven just from it's own internal temperature. If you have a bird that weighs in at 20 or more lbs. it is safe to assume your bird can be taken out at 160° at the breast and 175° at the thigh and left **covered** for an hour.
9. Tent the bird with foil and let rest for at least 15 minutes before carving. If you need more time to make gravy, heat up side dishes, etc., you can let the turkey set for up to an hour without losing too much heat.
10. Remember to carve your turkey with a very sharp or electric knife.

My 11th tip: Add at least a quart of turkey or chicken broth/stock to the pan before roasting, depending on the size of your bird*. As it evaporates, while the foil is on, it will provide a lot of wonderful moisture (steam) without having to baste. Other options are white or red wine, which will all also help your gravy as well.

*I buy two smaller turkeys: 4 of everything, less cooking time! The rule of thumb when it comes to turkey shopping: **Buy enough turkey for 1 pound per person.**

